

## Rep. Lofgren Introduces Resolution Calling for the Release of Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan

Washington, D.C. – Today, Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) introduced a resolution, co-sponsored by Reps. Dan Lungren (R-CA) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), calling for the release of Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan and other political prisoners being held by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan, a U.S. citizen, is being held by the Vietnamese government for speaking out against human rights violations committed by the communist government. The resolution also calls on the State Department to redesignate Vietnam as a “Country of Particular Concern” and for the removal of permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) status with Vietnam unless all political and religious prisoners are released and significant and immediate human rights reforms are made by the Government of Vietnam.

“The thugs in Hanoi continue to imprison and torture at will,” noted Rep. Zoe Lofgren. “As long as the Vietnamese government continues violating basic human and religious rights, I will continue advocating for the removal of PNTR. The regime in Hanoi must be held accountable for its actions.”

### RESOLUTION

Condemning the detention of Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan, a citizen of the United States, by the Government of Vietnam, and expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States should remove permanent normal trade relations status with Vietnam unless Dr. Nguyen is released.

Whereas Vietnam has a long history of human rights and freedom of speech violations;

Whereas, despite ongoing human rights violations, on November 13, 2006, Vietnam was removed as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC), as a precondition to the extension of permanent normal trade relations to Vietnam, but against the recommendation of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom;

Whereas the extension of permanent normal trade relations to Vietnam was also a precondition for its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO);

Whereas human rights conditions have deteriorated in Vietnam since its accession to the WTO;

Whereas, on November 17, 2007, pro-democracy advocate Nguyen Quoc Quan was arrested by the Government of Vietnam for exercising his free speech rights, as guaranteed by Article 69 of the Constitution of Vietnam;

Whereas, during 2007, Father Nguyen Van Ly, Nguyen Dao, Nguyen Bac Truyen, Le Nguyen Sang, Nguyen Van Dai, Le Thi Cong Nhan, and Tran Quoc Hien were each sentenced to several years in prison for exercising their free speech rights, as guaranteed by Article 69 of the Constitution of Vietnam;

Whereas, Nguyen Quoc Quan, continues to be detained by the Government of Vietnam;

Whereas Nobel Peace Prize nominee Thich Quang Do is in his twenty-sixth year of detention;

Whereas neither Nguyen Quoc Quan, nor any of the aforementioned individuals, advocated or engaged in violence in their opposition to the Vietnamese Government or its policies;

Whereas these convictions are in contravention of Article 69 of the Vietnamese Constitution, which states that ‘The citizen shall enjoy freedom of opinion and speech, freedom of the press, the right to be informed and the right to assemble, form associations and hold demonstrations in accordance with the provisions of the law’;

Whereas these convictions are in contravention of the rights contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to which Vietnam is a State Party, specifically Article 19 (freedom of expression) and Article 22 (freedom of association);

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom's 2007 Annual Report states, '[S]ince [Vietnam] joined the World Trade Organization (WTO), the government of Vietnam has initiated a crackdown on human rights defenders and advocates for the freedoms of speech, association, and assembly, including many religious leaders who previously were the leading advocates for religious freedom in Vietnam'; and

Whereas, in May 2007, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom recommended Vietnam be re-designated as a Country of Particular Concern: Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That--

(1) the House of Representatives--

(A) calls for the release of Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan and other political detainees; and

(B) strongly condemns the ongoing human rights abuses in Vietnam; and

(2) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States should--

(A) re-designate Vietnam as a Country of Particular Concern, pursuant to the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, and the 2007 recommendation of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom;

(B) demand that the Government of Vietnam comply with internationally recognized standards for basic freedoms and human rights; and

(C) remove permanent normal trade relations status with Vietnam unless all political and religious prisoners are released and significant and immediate human rights reforms are made by the Government of Vietnam.

Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren is serving her seventh term in Congress representing most of the City of San Jose and Santa Clara County. She serves as Chair of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law. She also Chairs the House Administration Subcommittee on Elections and serves on the House Homeland Security Committee. Congresswoman Lofgren is Chair of the California Democratic Congressional Delegation consisting of 34 Democratic members of the U.S. House of Representatives from California.